

October 2, 1920.

THE NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION.

1512 H Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C.

The National Park-to-Park Highway Tour



An automobile tour of much significance is now attracting the attention of the northwest. It is known as the National Park-to-Park Tour, and its purpose is to arouse enthusiasm for the perfecting of motor routes connecting our principal national parks and the creation therefrom of a gigantic scenic highway.

This is a publicity tour on an unprecedented scale. At every town and city through which it passes it is met by Chambers of Commerce, Rotary Clubs and other organizations, and noon and night meetings are addressed by enthusiastic speakers. State Highway Associations escort it through their respective States. Governors receive it at State Capitols. Local newspapers announce its coming weeks in advance, chronicle its approach and spread-head its arrival. Press Associations carry its details. A score of Chambers of Commerce plot its progress upon big maps publicly displayed.

Not only the Highway Associations whose routes are in some part included in the proposed National Park-to-Park Highway, but many others also are backing this tour, in addition to the National Parks Association, the American Automobile Association, the National Park Service, the Rotarians, Optimists and western organizations generally of business and public spirited character.

It amounts, in short, to a demonstration aimed at combining twelve western states into united action for an American scenic highway whose like exists nowhere in the world. Imagine a circle road 5,600 miles in length with nine national parks, every one different, strung upon it!

Besides its mission of good roads, this unique publicity tour is likely to arouse the west to a better appreciation of the national character and importance of our national parks.

The organization to undertake this mission was created at Denver last June with Gus Holm's of Wyoming, President; Dr. George Schumacker of Colorado, Vice President; L. L. Newton of Wyoming, Secretary; Harry N. Burhans of Colorado, Corresponding Secretary; and Scott Leavitt of Montana, Treasurer. F. J. Chamberlin and W. J. Spray of Colorado are Trustees.

A. L. Westgarde of the American Automobile Association was sent out upon a path-finding trip from Denver June 28, and the tour began on August 26, a few days after his return.

Passing northward through the Rocky Mountain National Park, the party made fifteen towns in Colorado and Wyoming before reaching Yellowstone National Park through the Cody entrance. Its mapped course then leads northward through Montana to Glacier National Park; westward across Idaho and Washington to Seattle; South to Rainier National Park; through Portland, Oregon, to Crater Lake National Park; lengthwise through California, of course including San Francisco, to Lassen Volcanic, Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks; thence to Los Angeles, and eastward through Grand Canyon and Mesa Verde National Parks back to the starting point at Denver, where the tour will finish on November 9.

Naturally such a tour encounters many unique experiences. In one Colorado town the persistent blowing of a syren to summon the tourists to an after-luncheon start was mistaken for a fire alarm and the local department turned out in great haste. At Douglas, Wyoming, where they arrived one Sunday night, the minister turned over the evening church service to the speakers of the party while he worked the motion picture machine.

The tour will close in a convention at Denver on November 11, 12, and 13, attended by members of the travelling party, representatives of sympathetic organizations and delegations from cities and States through which the new highway is planned to pass. A memorial to Congress will be prepared asking for the hard-surfacing of the highway, much of which traverses public lands, and the appropriation of a publicity fund for the national parks and their connecting roads. A constructive program will be prepared behind which it is hoped to array the western states concerned and the national government.

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PROGRESS OF THE WAR ON THE NATIONAL PARKS.

Since the issue of Bulletin 11, the only important news of the movements of the interests seeking irrigation reservoirs in Yellowstone Lake comes in local newspaper clippings from the lower Yellowstone Valley in Montana. These report public speeches by Senator Walsh promising to push a bill this winter for authority to dam Yellowstone Lake. In one of these he declares that he will get this legislation if he gets nothing else at the session.

This is the first authentic statement of intention. The Yellowstone Irrigation Association, during all its active campaign of the summer and fall, has so carefully guarded its plans that even the National Park Service has found nothing authoritative to include in a review of various irrigation schemes in its coming annual report.

It is a fair assumption that we shall know nothing of the detail of the plan until the bill is introduced and printed in December and that the measure will then be pushed with all possible speed.

WOMEN RALLY TO THE DEFENSE.

On the defense side there is important news which will be reported at the right time.

Meanwhile it is heartening to know that the great body of women voters throughout the country are coming to the support of the national parks against any commercial aggression. On July 27, the new National Federation of Business and Professional Women, at its second annual convention at St. Paul, passed the following resolutions:

Whereas, A bill has been introduced into Congress to permit the construction of reservoirs and canals in the southwestern part of the Yellowstone Park; and whereas, if the Government permits the opening of the Park to private interests it will be establishing a precedent for other private interests to enter our National Parks;

Therefore, Be it Resolved: That the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs protest against the passage of this bill; and further be it resolved that we protest against any bill which permits the exploitation of our National Parks.

This organization represents three hundred clubs.

On September 16, last, the Board of Directors of the General Federation of Women's Clubs passed, in Washington, the following resolutions:

Resolved: That the General Federation of Women's Clubs heartily endorses the Congressional policy of the last forty-eight years for preserving our National Parks in a state of absolute nature.

That it considers our National Parks invaluable National Museums of Nature which it is the Nation's duty to hold untouched for the study and enjoyment of posterity.

That it protests against the inclusion of National Parks and Monuments in the provisions of the Federal Water Power Act of June, 1920, and requests Congress to amend that Act so as to exclude these Reservations from its authority.

That it protests earnestly against the granting of any irrigation or other privilege in the Yellowstone or any other National Park except those customary and necessary for the comfort and convenience of visitors.

That it authorizes the President of the General Federation to take such action as she deems necessary to carry out the spirit and purposes of these Resolutions.

The clubs united in the General Federation have an aggregate membership of two and a half million women distributed among all the States and Congressional Districts in the nation.

PRESIDENT-ELECT HARDING FOR PROTECTION.

In reply to a telegram from the National Association of Audubon Societies, at its annual convention in New York City on October 26, asking whether his policy, if elected, "would be to guard the National Parks and Bird Reservations against any commercial attempts that may be made to exploit them", Senator Harding wired promptly from Marion:

"I am fully in favor of a policy which will guard the integrity of our national parks and our bird reservations. I favor the enforcement of our treaty with Canada for the protection of valuable migratory birds."

There is nothing hesitating or ambiguous about that.

IMPORTANT PUBLICATIONS.

Emerson Hough's article in the Saturday Evening Post of September 25, entitled "Pawning the Heirlooms" has made a profound impression throughout the country.

William C. Gregg's article in the Saturday Evening Post of November 20, destroys the principle argument for the proposed reservoir in the Falls River Basin by describing the region as one of the most beautiful and useful parts of Yellowstone National Park. Mr. Gregg explored it last summer. It is not a swamp, as the irrigationists alleged, and it will become the most popular of motor camping grounds as soon as the National Park Service can open a road into it.

ONE WEAKNESS IN THE DEFENSE.

Letters received from their Congressmen by many of our members show a wide failure to appreciate the one vital foundation principle upon which the whole national parks structure stands, that of complete conservation. A representative from New England writes that all will be well provided that Congress will see that none but sound enterprizes enter the parks. Another, also in the East, thinks that great care in the architecture of the dams will tend to make them improve the parks. And so on.

We can not blame our Congressmen for failing to appreciate the fact that a single commercial enterprize in any national park is a denial of the purpose for which these parks exist, that the only difference between them and national forests lies in the complete conservation of the national parks, and that within a dozen years after the first dam is built, our national parks will have fully returned, in all but empty name, to the status of the national forests from which previous Congresses withdrew them for the special purpose of completely conserving them.

We can not blame Congressmen for not knowing all this, for they are the hardest working men in America, and the national parks, never having been an issue, have not before been called specially to their attention.

But the fact puts it up to each one of us to make sure that his own Congressman understands and will work for the fullest preservation of the National Parks System.

ROBERT STERLING YARD,

Executive Secretary.